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FROM THE AMBASSADOR FOR A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [SO](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG IN GRAVE JEOPARDY AS FIGHTING RAGES

Classified By: Ambassador Michael Ranneberger. Reasons: 1.4 (b,d).

11. (S/NF) Summary: This message reports on actions we are taking and recommend to support the TFG to resist the al-Shabaab onslaught in Mogadishu. Very urgent action is required. End summary.

12. (S/NF) As reported through cables, e-mails, and phone calls, the al-Shabaab onslaught in Mogadishu, which began May 9, gravely threatens the existence of the TFG. By May 10 - 11 it became clear that the fighting was not merely another cycle of violence, but a concerted attack to bring down the TFG. Intelligence reporting indicates Eritrean support for this al-Shabaab attack, and the increased involvement of foreign fighters, some of whom are moving by boat towards Mogadishu. Aweys' appearance in Mogadishu before the fighting began was not coincidental, and he is probably responsible for the support the Habr Gedr/Ayer are providing to the al-Shabaab. The fighting is continuing to rage, with more major fighting expected today.

13. (S/NF) Working together, this Mission, regional posts, and Washington have been taking steps to support the TFG. Assistant Secretary Carson's outreach to the African Union on the margins of his visit to Nairobi has helped strengthen AU resolve. The AU has made it clear it will hold firm at the positions it occupies in Mogadishu and will provide ammunition to TFG forces. The statement Washington issued on the fighting was helpful. We have been in frequent contact with the senior leadership of the TFG and with the SRSG.

14. (S/NF) In addition, we are reaching out to key Habr Gedr/Ayer leaders to urge them to pull back from support for the al-Shabaab, and to support the TFG. We have warned that their support for the al-Shabaab puts them at odds with the international community. I called Puntland President Farooqe to ask if he had any additional forces he could deploy to support the TFG but, as expected, he does not.

15. (S/NF) The TFG has sufficient fighters --as many as 4,000 plus-- and feels relatively confident that it can resist the al-Shabaab onslaught if it receives sufficient financial support. The TFG does not want AMISOM to take a more aggressive posture at this point. The TFG has appealed to us for urgent financial support to pay its forces. During phone calls May 14, TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke and Minister of Security Omar Hashi separately reiterated this request. They also said the TFG needs more weapons, in addition to ammunition.

16. (S/NF) Actions:

-- We need Washington approval to send 500,000 dollars immediately to the TFG (from the money identified for the Joint Security Forces), with authority to send another 500,000 tranche as needed. We understand that Washington has determined that a UN sanctions exception is needed to provide

these funds. If so, this must be obtained today, so that the funds can be dispatched on May 15.

-- We should intensify outreach to key international partners to seek urgent support for the TFG. Requests for provision of weapons for the TFG should be included in this based on needs the TFG has identified.

-- We are making clear through Somali media our firm support for the TFG.

-- We are in close touch with a range of Somali actors to monitor developments.

¶7. (S/NF) It is worth considering more pro-active steps to counter Eritrean support for the al-Shabaab and the movement of foreign fighters toward Mogadishu.

¶8. (S/NF) Collapse of the TFG would be a major setback for U.S. interests. An al-Shabaab government and/or a return to total chaos and warlordism, or some such combination, would substantially increase the already strong terrorist threat emanating from Somalia. On the other hand, successful TFG resistance to this al-Shabaab attack, coupled with a strong demonstration of U.S. and international support in the process, could be a milestone in continuing efforts to strengthen the TFG and our relationship to it.
RANNEBERGER